

## **Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 149**

### **RESOLUTION CHAPTER 142**

Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 149—Relative to School Attendance Awareness Month.

[Filed with Secretary of State September 2, 2014.]

#### **LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL’S DIGEST**

ACR 149, Weber. School Attendance Awareness Month.

This measure would designate the month of September 2014 as School Attendance Awareness Month, and would encourage public officials, educators, and communities in California to observe the month with appropriate activities and programs.

WHEREAS, The Legislature and the Governor enacted a local control funding formula and clearly established school attendance as a matter of great state interest by explicitly identifying pupil engagement, as measured by school attendance and chronic absenteeism rates, as a state priority; and

WHEREAS, The Legislature first enacted Senate Bill 1357 of the 2009–10 Regular Session to establish the definition of a “chronic absentee” as a pupil who misses 10 percent or more of school for any reason, making no distinction between excused and unexcused absences; and

WHEREAS, For the first time, every county office of education, school district, and charter school in California is required to calculate chronic absenteeism rates and establish specific goals and actions to improve pupil engagement; and

WHEREAS, The impact of chronic absenteeism hits low-income pupils and children of color particularly hard if they do not have the resources to make up for lost time in the classroom. Low-income pupils and children of color are more likely to face systemic barriers in getting to school, including unreliable transportation, lack of access to health care, unstable or unaffordable housing, and even unfair discipline policies; and

WHEREAS, Improving school climate, reducing instruction missed due to discipline policies and out-of-school suspensions, and implementing schoolwide positive behavior intervention and support systems and restorative justice practices can have a significant impact on improving attendance; and

WHEREAS, School attendance improves, and chronic absenteeism is significantly reduced, when schools, parents, and communities work together to monitor and promote good attendance and address hurdles that keep children from getting to school; and

WHEREAS, Schools and school districts must do more to track, calculate, and share data on how many and which pupils are chronically absent so that

schools and communities can work to deliver the right interventions for the right pupils; and

WHEREAS, Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Torlakson, Attorney General Kamala D. Harris, Secretary of California Health and Human Services Diane Dooley, Chief Justice Tani G. Cantil-Sakauye, and others have joined efforts to combat chronic absenteeism to encourage state and local action to improve the overall health, safety, and well-being of our children by promoting public awareness and reforms that improve school attendance; now, therefore, be it

*Resolved by the Assembly of the State of California, the Senate thereof concurring,* That the Legislature designates the month of September 2014 as School Attendance Awareness Month in the State of California, and encourages public officials, educators, and communities in California to observe the month with appropriate activities and programs; and be it further

*Resolved,* That the Legislature hereby joins with other communities across our nation to increase awareness of the importance of school attendance by addressing school attendance barriers and the root causes of chronic absence; and be it further

*Resolved,* That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies of this resolution to the Superintendent of Public Instruction, the Attorney General, the Secretary of California Health and Human Services, the Chief Justice of California, the author, and the coauthors for appropriate distribution.